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II. RESPONSE TO OFFICE ACTION

Reconsideration of the claims in light of the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested. The Examiner's comments from the Office Action are reprinted below in 10-point bold type and are followed by Assignee's remarks.

A. Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claim 39 and 40 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Bourne, Jr., U.S. 3,094,170. Regarding claims 39 and 40, Bourne Jr. discloses a hollow mandrel (38), a packing means (44, 46), a valve (62) engaging the mandrel (at 60) such that relative rotation is precluded to facilitate removal (col. 6, lines 17-33), a central member (72) having a selective releasing means (54) and an anchoring means (18).

Without acquiescing to the characterization of the prior art found in the office action as applied to claim 29, and in an attempt to move this case to issuance, Assignee has amended claim 39 to include the limitation that the means for engaging the mandrel being a flapper with a non-circular cross section adapted to selectively engage the mandrel. As such, it is believed claims 39 (and 40 depending therefrom) are in condition for allowance.

B. Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 1, 2, 4-15 and 20-37 are allowed.

It is believed that all pending claims are now in condition for allowance.

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C. Conclusion

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney at 713.787.1478 with any questions, comments or suggestions relating to the referenced patent application.

Date: November 6, 2006

Respectfully submitted,



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